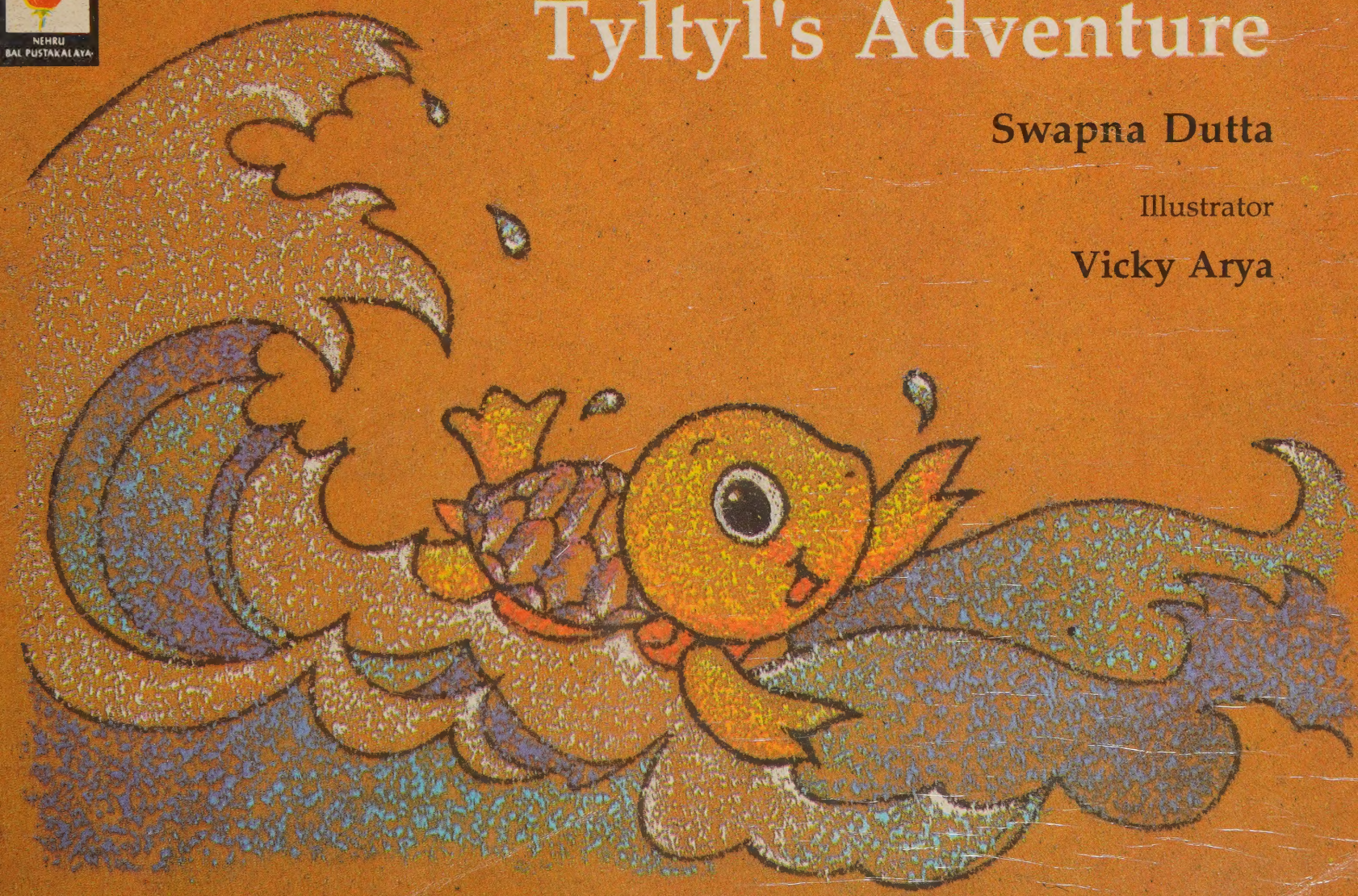
NEHRU BAL PUSTAKALAYA

Tyltyl's Adventure

Swapna Dutta

Illustrator

Vicky Arya



ISBN 81-237-2213-3

First Edition 1997
First Reprint 1998 (*Saka* 1920)
© Swapna Dutta, 1996
Rs. 6.50
Published by the Director, National Book Trust, India
A-5, Green Park, New Delhi - 110 016

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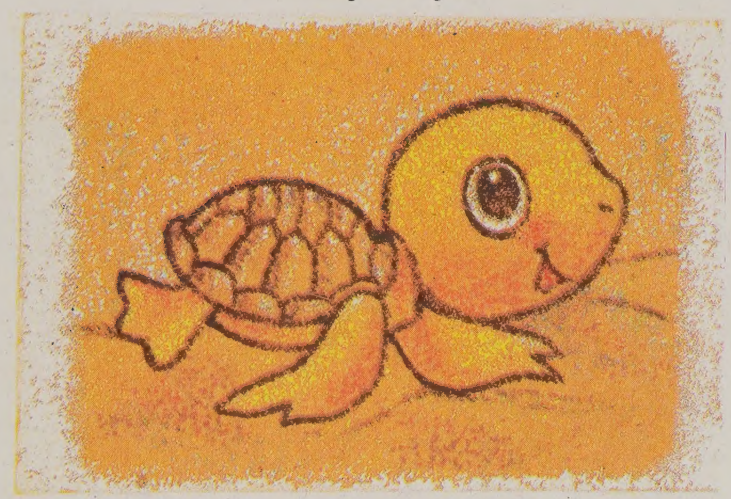

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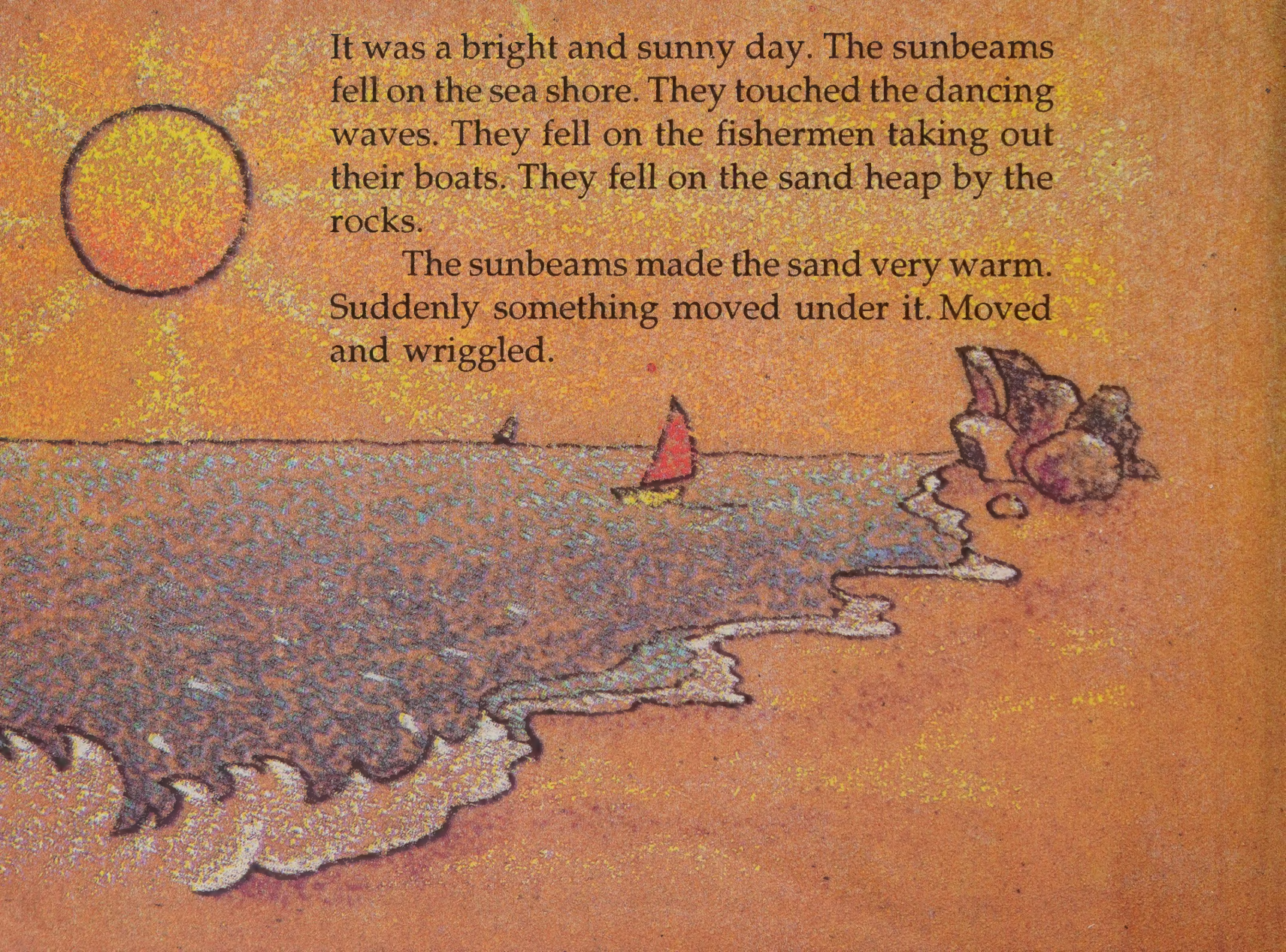
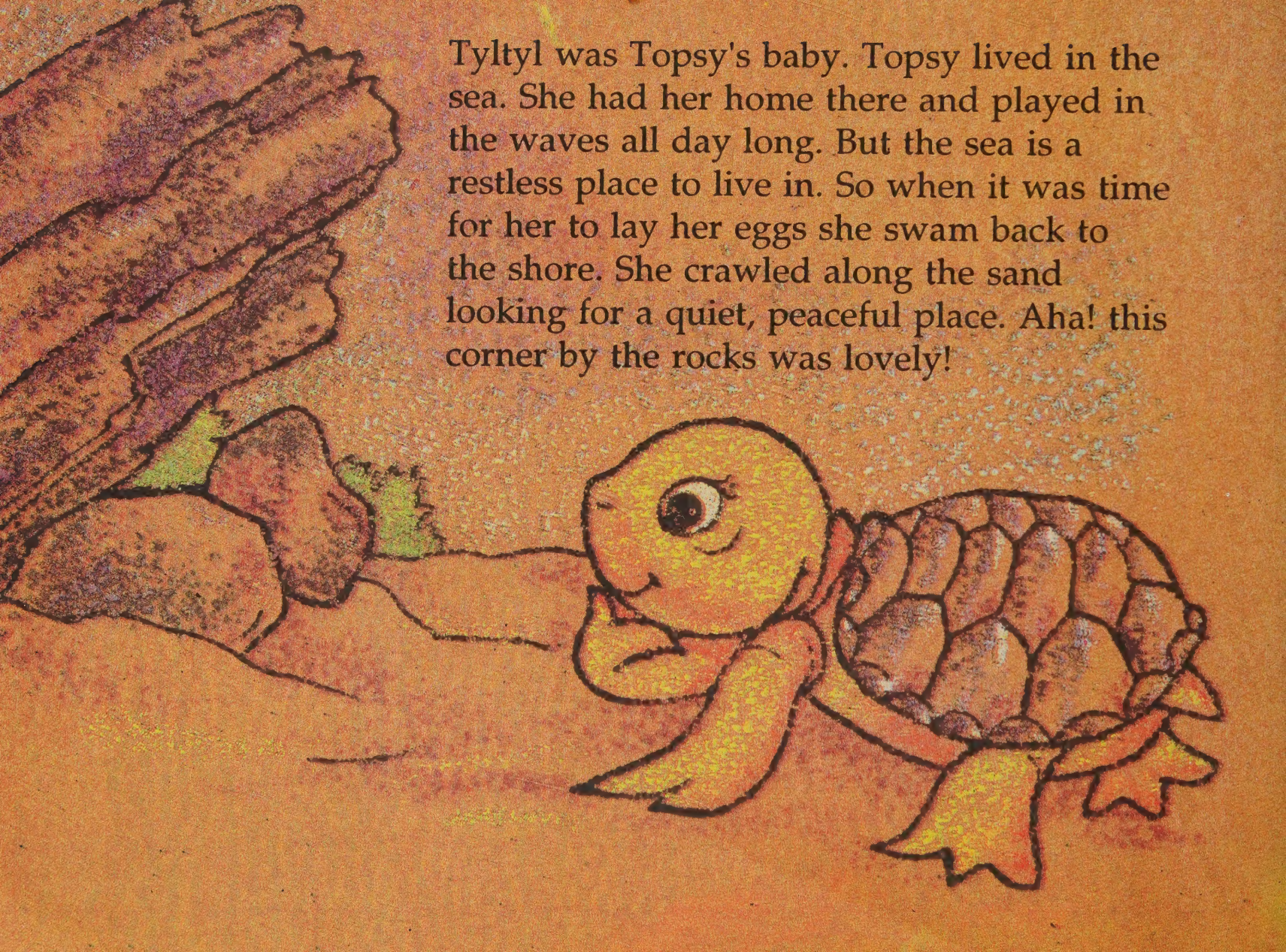
It was a bright and sunny day. The sunbeams fell on the sea shore. They touched the dancing waves. They fell on the fishermen taking out their boats. They fell on the sand heap by the rocks.

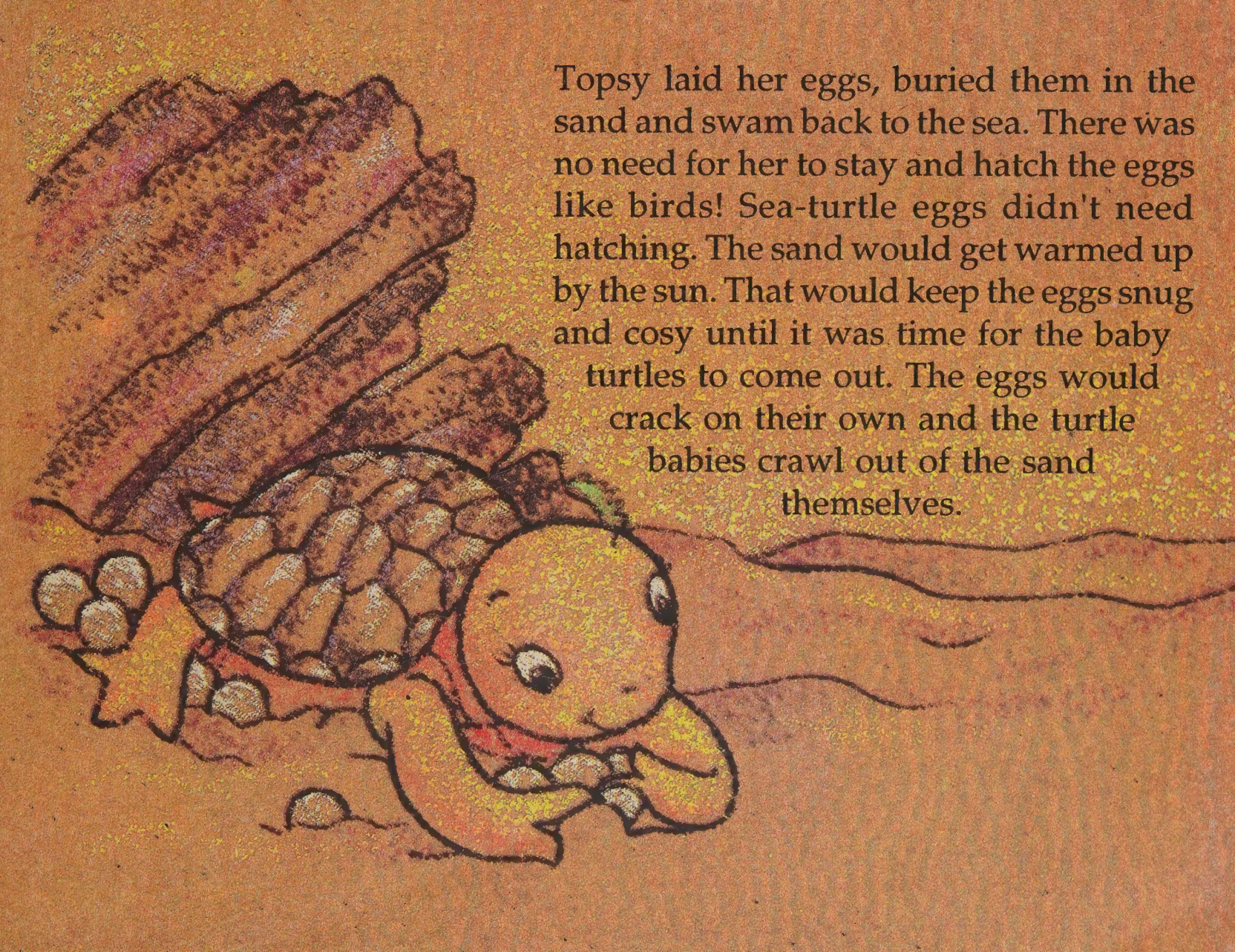
The sunbeams made the sand very warm. Suddenly something moved under it. Moved and wriggled.



Wriggled and moved. Something cracked below. More movement. Then a tiny creature with a little soft shell on its back crawled out of the sand. It was Tyltyl, the baby sea-turtle.



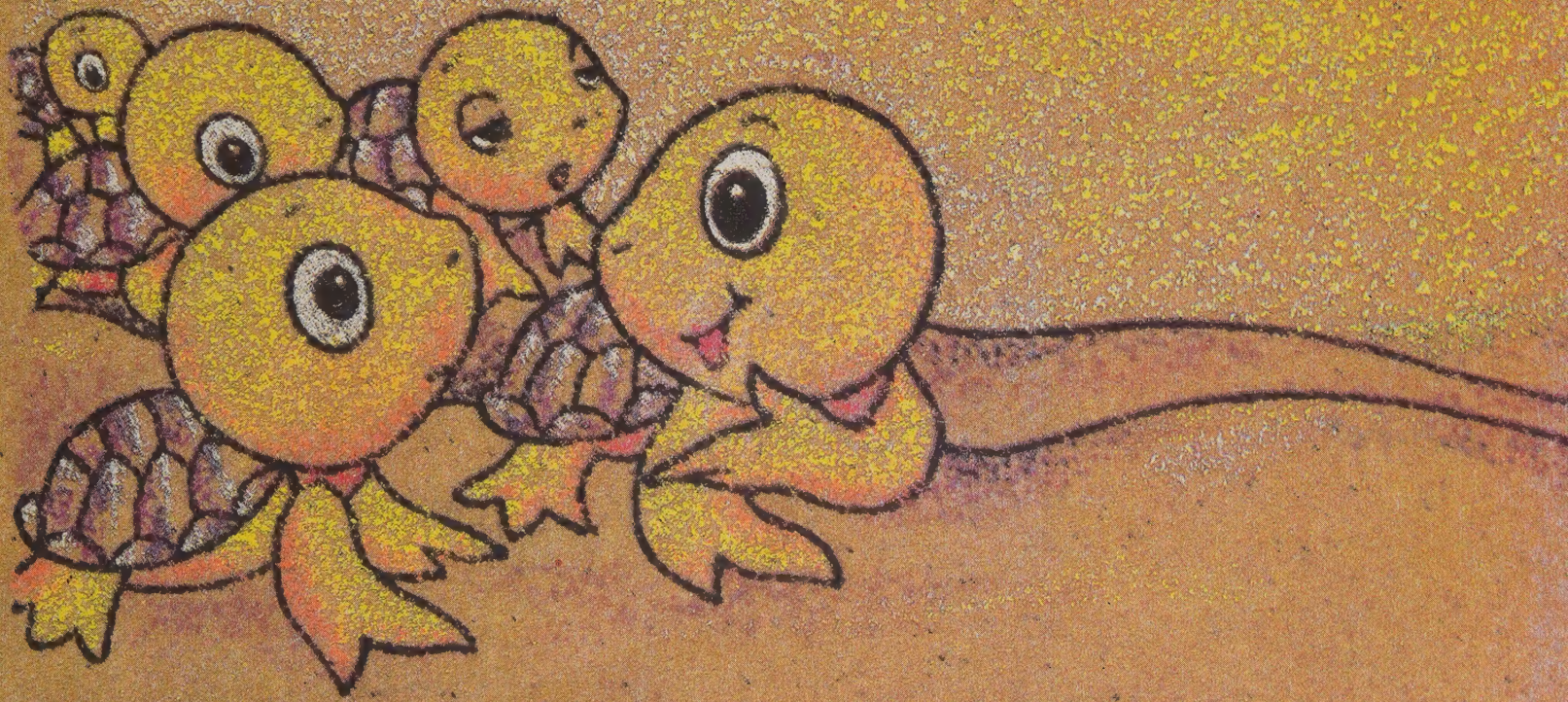
Tyltyl was Topsy's baby. Topsy lived in the sea. She had her home there and played in the waves all day long. But the sea is a restless place to live in. So when it was time for her to lay her eggs she swam back to the shore. She crawled along the sand looking for a quiet, peaceful place. Aha! this corner by the rocks was lovely!

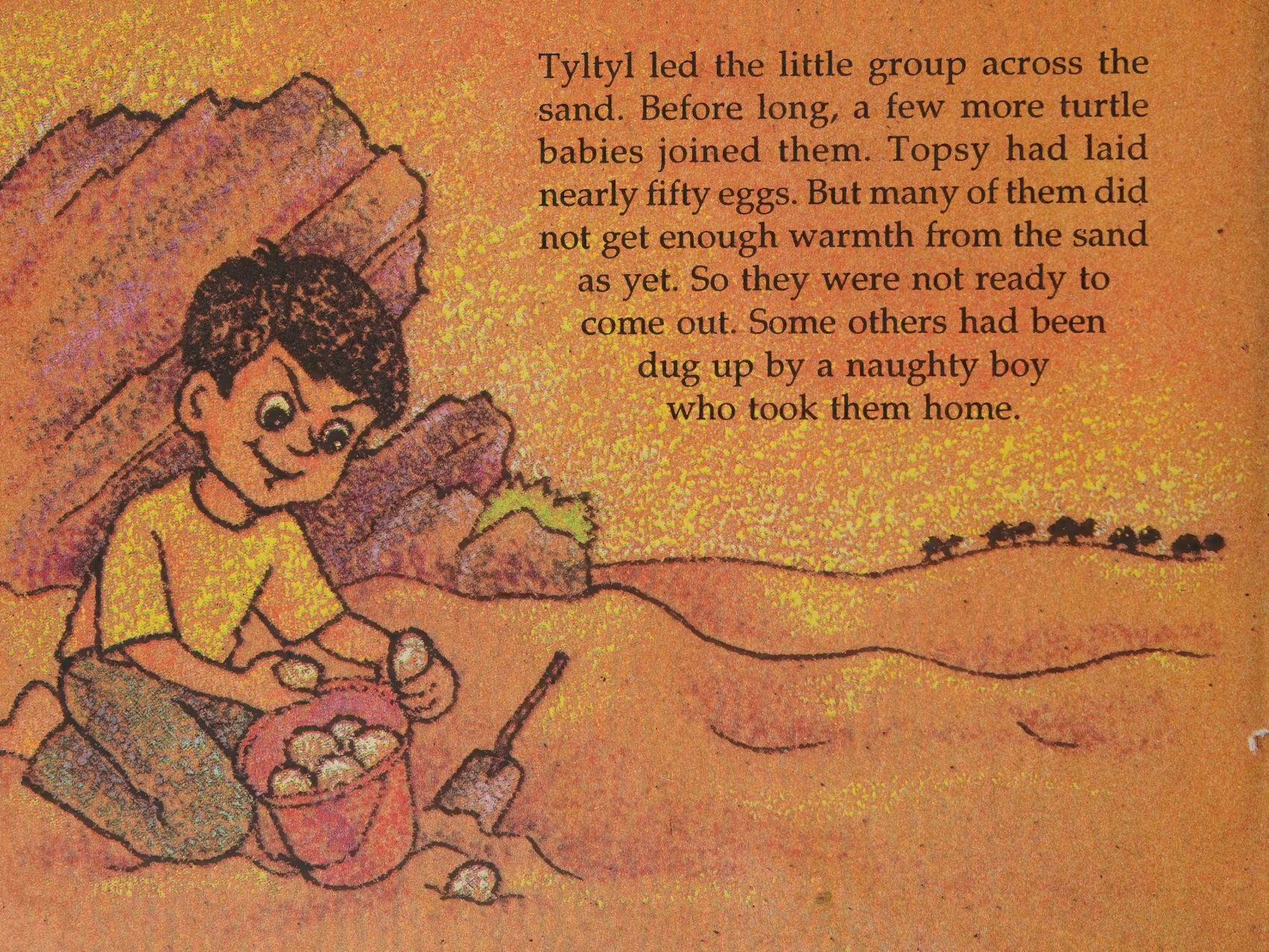


Topsy laid her eggs, buried them in the sand and swam back to the sea. There was no need for her to stay and hatch the eggs like birds! Sea-turtle eggs didn't need hatching. The sand would get warmed up by the sun. That would keep the eggs snug and cosy until it was time for the baby turtles to come out. The eggs would crack on their own and the turtle babies crawl out of the sand themselves.

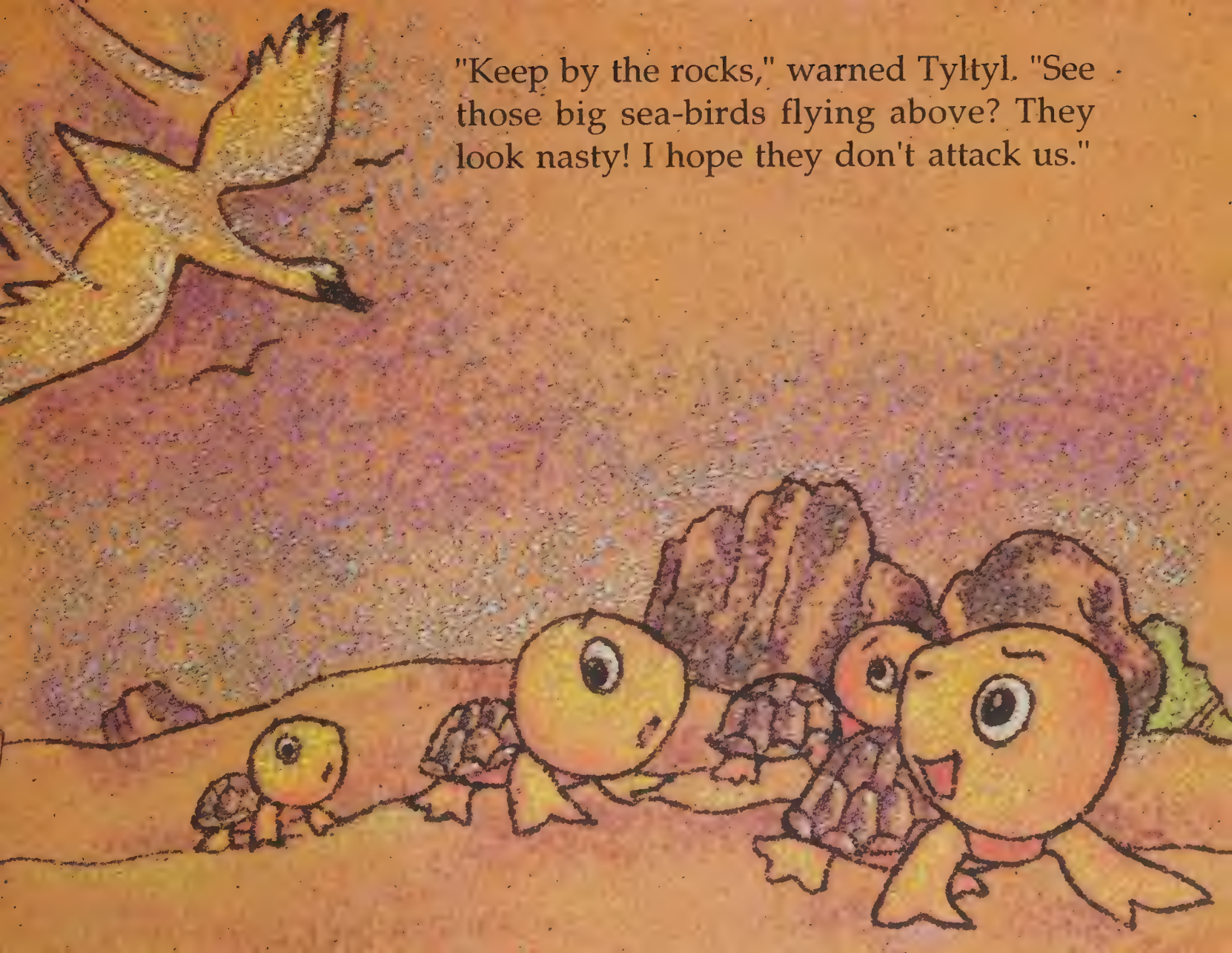
Tyltyl craned his tiny neck and looked about him. The strong sunlight glared into his eyes making him feel dizzy for a moment. He heard the roar of the sea and the sound of waves breaking over the sand. Something inside told him what he now had to do and where he had to go. The sea was already calling him!

The sand moved beneath his feet. Five more baby turtles crawled out of the sand. They were his brothers and sisters. "Hello," they said looking at Tyltyl. " Hello," said Tyltyl,"Come on, follow me. We don't have much time to lose." "Where are we going?" asked one of them."The sea, of course," said Tyltyl.

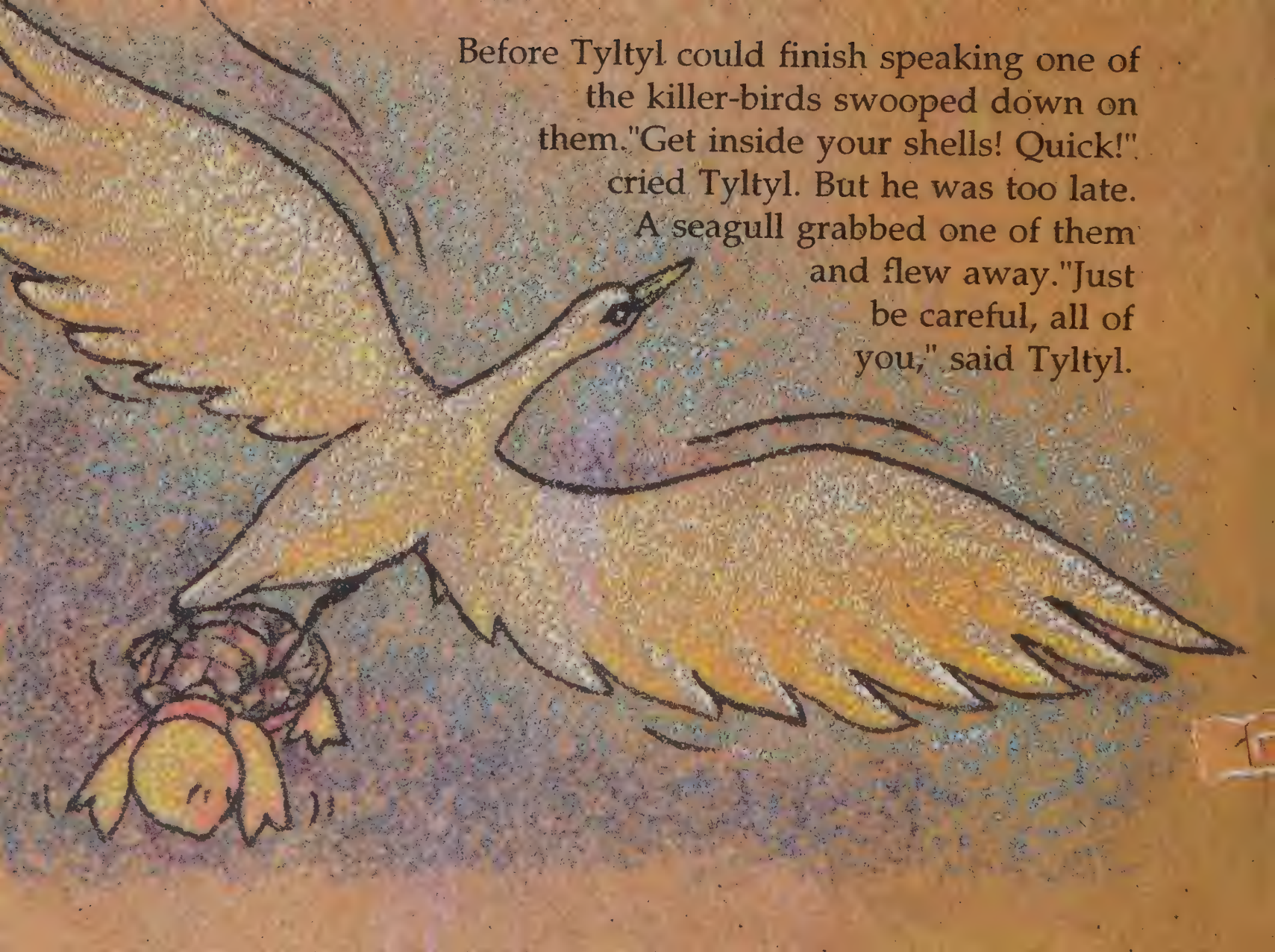




Tyltyl led the little group across the sand. Before long, a few more turtle babies joined them. Topsy had laid nearly fifty eggs. But many of them did not get enough warmth from the sand as yet. So they were not ready to come out. Some others had been dug up by a naughty boy who took them home.



"Keep by the rocks," warned Tyltyl. "See those big sea-birds flying above? They look nasty! I hope they don't attack us."



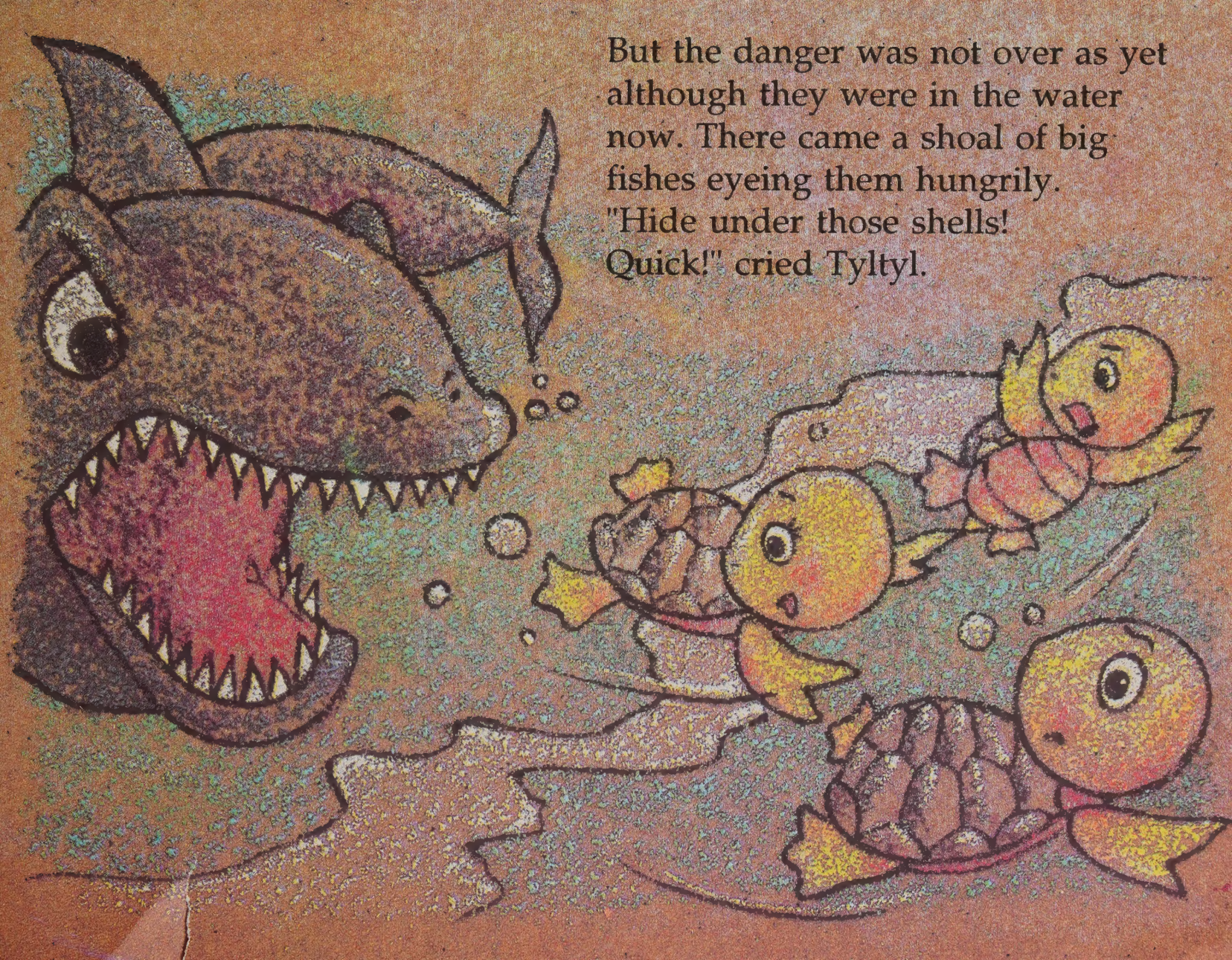
Before Tyltyl could finish speaking one of the killer-birds swooped down on them."Get inside your shells! Quick!" cried Tyltyl. But he was too late. A seagull grabbed one of them and flew away."Just be careful, all of you," said Tyltyl.

"How far is the sea?" asked one of his brothers. "I'm hungry and thirsty too," said another. "Let's see what we can find," said Tyltyl. Being the eldest, Tyltyl was naturally their leader. "There are some tiny worms here," said Tyltyl, sniffing inside a sand heap, "And there's water in that puddle." The baby turtles took a break and had a picnic on the beach.

"How far is the sea?" asked a sister. "Not too far, I guess," said Tyltyl. "Can't you hear the sound of waves breaking? And look at that blue haze over there. That must be the sea." "Will our mama be there, waiting for us?" asked another one. "I guess so," said Tyltyl looking about him carefully. "But she doesn't know that we are out of the sand."

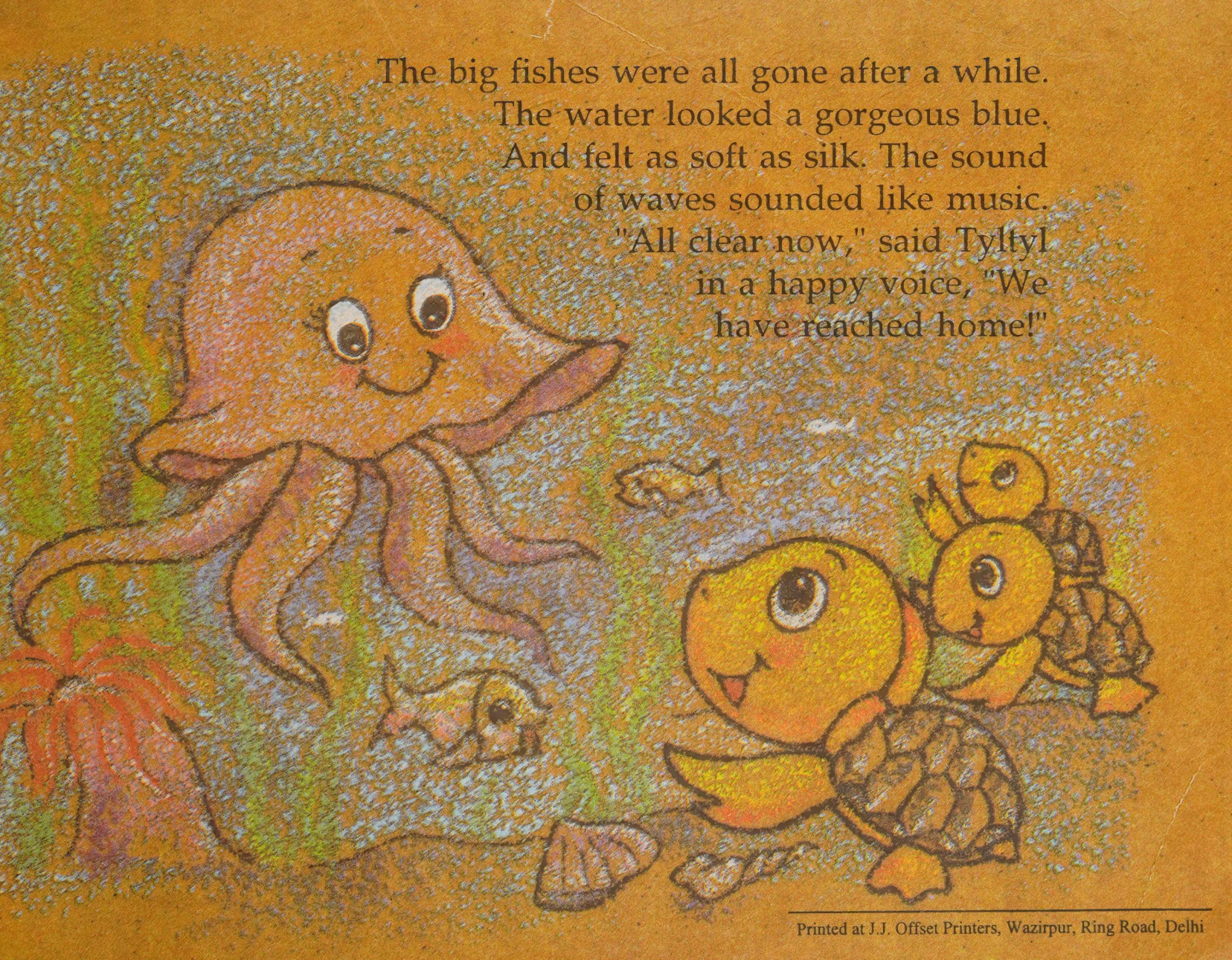
"I hope there are no more horrid birds," said the youngest of the group. They crawled along slowly, hiding beside rocks wherever there were any. A group of seagulls tried to get at them once more. But this time they had a warning and were safe within their shells.

The sound of the sea grew louder. The sand felt wetter beneath their feet. Splash! There was the foam from the tip of a breaker touching them! How nice and cold it felt! "We like the sea," said Tyltyl's brothers and sisters. "Of course, we like the sea," agreed Tyltyl, "The sea is going to be our home now."



But the danger was not over as yet although they were in the water now. There came a shoal of big fishes eyeing them hungrily. "Hide under those shells! Quick!" cried Tyltyl.

They ducked under a pile of empty shells just in time. Tyltyl looked around him anxiously. He didn't want any accidents. "Life seems to be jolly hard," said one of his brothers. "It seems to me that we are always hiding from killers of one kind or another!" "Life is an adventure, silly!" said Tyltyl. "We'll all get used to it in time. And enjoy it too. See if we don't."



The big fishes were all gone after a while. The water looked a gorgeous blue. And felt as soft as silk. The sound of waves sounded like music. "All clear now," said Tyltyl in a happy voice, "We have reached home!"

Printed at J.J. Offset Printers, Wazirpur, Ring Road, Delhi

ISBN 81-237-2213-3

National Book Trust, India

W7-CND-193